

R E P O R T
OF
THE COMMITTEE
OF THE
Society for the Relief
OF THE
DISTRESSED SETTLERS
AT THE
CAPE OF GOOD HOPE;
WITH
LETTERS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS,
ILLUSTRATIVE OF THEIR PRESENT CONDITION.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR THOMAS AND GEORGE UNDERWOOD,
32, FLEET-STREET.
1824.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

REPORT, &c.

At a Meeting held this Day, at the City of London Tavern, to take into Consideration the distressed Situation of the Settlers at the Cape of Good Hope ;

WM. THOMPSON, Esq. M. P. and Alderman, in the Chair.

Extracts from various letters received by merchants from their correspondents in Cape Town were read, exhibiting, in the most affecting terms, the great misery which prevails among the Settlers in that Colony, occasioned by the failure of their crops for three successive seasons, and by the calamitous inundation in October last.

The proceedings of the Society formed in Cape Town for their relief were also read, in which the above very distressing accounts are fully authenticated, and wherein the total inadequacy of the funds of that Society to relieve such accumulated wretchedness as now exists, without the assistance of a benevolent British Public, is clearly demonstrated.

It was stated to the meeting, that a deputation had waited on the Right Hon. Earl Bathurst, his Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonial Department: which deputation reported, that his lordship had received them in the most polite and condescending manner, that he readily entered into their views as to the propriety and necessity of raising a Subscription, and granted full permission to the deputation to make use of his lordship's name in any way they thought would best promote the object in view.

The following Resolutions were then carried unanimously:—

Moved by John Foulger, Esq. and seconded by Patrick Home, Esq.

1. That this meeting contemplates with much satisfaction the exertions made by the Society in Cape Town, on behalf of their suffering countrymen; but that this meeting is fully convinced that the limited funds of that Society cannot remove the mass of misery now existing among the Settlers.

Moved by Roger Harries, Esq. seconded by John Gore, Esq.

2. That it appears to this meeting highly necessary that a Subscription be immediately entered into for the Relief of the Distressed Settlers at the Cape of Good Hope; that a committee be appointed to manage the same; and that the most efficient measures be adopted to make the object as public as possible.

Moved by A. Borradaile, Esq. and seconded by Henry Houghton, Esq.

3. That the following gentlemen form the committee, with leave to add to their numbers:—

Wm. Thompson, Esq. M.P. and Andrew Steedman, Esq.

Alderman. Joseph Ainsley, Esq.

John Key, Esq. Alderman. Thomas Underwood, Esq.

Rev. John Campbell. Thomas Sanderson, Esq.

Roger Harries, Esq. Henry Houghton, Esq.

Wm. Burnie, Esq. J. B. Ebdon, Esq.

Hamn. Ross, Esq. James Carfrae, Esq.

John Foulger, Esq. Daniel Jones, Esq.

Wm. Greig, Esq. Alexander Sinclair, Esq.

Abraham Borradaile, Esq. John Gore, Esq.

Patrick Home, Esq. Richard Dixon, Esq.

John King, Esq.

And, that Wm. Fry, Esq. be requested to act as Treasurer; and Wm. M. Harries, Esq. as Honorary Secretary.

Moved by J. B. Ebdon, Esq. and seconded by Roger Harries, Esq.

4. That an Appeal to the Public be forthwith inserted in the public papers, and that it be printed, with extracts from the pro-

ceedings of the Cape Town Society, and other authentic information, and that the committee be requested to circulate the same as widely as possible.

WM. THOMPSON, Chairman.

Mr. Alderman Thompson having left the chair,

It was moved by A. Borradaile, Esq. and seconded by John Foulger, Esq. and carried unanimously,

That the best thanks of this meeting be presented to Mr. Alderman Thompson, for his polite conduct and attention in the chair on this occasion.

Subscriptions will be duly announced in subsequent advertisements.

Subscriptions are received by the treasurer, Wm. Fry, Esq. St. Mildred's-court, Poultry ; by Messrs. Frys and Chapman, and the several Bankers in the Metropolis ; by Thos. Underwood, Esq. 32, Fleet-street, Agent to the Committee at Cape Town ; and by the Committee, at the City of London Tavern, to whom all communications are to be addressed.

City of London Tavern, March 5, 1824.

APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC.

Among the numerous objects which have from time to time called forth the benevolence of the British public, none have presented stronger claims to their compassionate consideration than those now submitted on behalf of the unfortunate and destitute emigrants to the New Colony, at the Cape of Good Hope.

The hearts of Englishmen are ever alive to the distresses of their fellow-creatures, however distant their nation, however far removed from themselves in language, in habits, in religion : how much more readily then will this generous sympathy be extended towards an unfortunate portion of their fellow-countrymen, suffering under the accumulated misery of unrewarded industry, exhausted means, and disappointed hopes, expending their fruitless

labour on an ungrateful soil, and exposed to the incursions and depredations of an insidious and implacable enemy! Their cries of distress have been long heard by their more prosperous countrymen at the other extremity of the Cape Peninsula, and they have not been heard in vain. A Society was formed at Cape Town in 1820, for the purpose of affording relief as far as their means would extend. The utmost efforts, however, of this Society appear to have been totally inadequate to the constantly increasing calls on their humanity, for the recurrence of continued failures in the harvests, the frequent loss of cattle, and the recent calamity of an inundation, has involved a large portion of a population amounting to about 5000 souls in one common lot of hopeless ruin.

A Society has in consequence been formed in London in aid of the Society in Cape Town, and the committee begs to call the attention of the public to the following documents, feeling well assured that the communication of the well authenticated facts contained therein will not fail to promote such a measure of public munificence as may enable the Society to mitigate more effectually the severe distress of the objects on whose behalf they now most earnestly plead.

The following Extracts are taken from the Proceedings of the Society established at Cape Town for the Relief of the distressed Settlers in South Africa, at their Annual Meeting, 17th September, 1823.

The committee entrusted with the management of the Settlers' Fund, in presenting to the subscribers the account of the annual receipts and expenditure, are not aware that they can better resume their pledge to the public, whose charity they have dispensed, or afford stronger inducements for the continued and more extensive exercise of that charity, than by laying before them a plain statement of their proceedings; and they feel convinced that a simple narrative of facts will justify their further appeal to the liberality of the public in behalf of sufferings, which,

though they cannot be effectually removed by human means, may be greatly alleviated.

Your Committee will not pretend to affirm that they may not, in their endeavours to relieve abject poverty, sometimes have extended aid to unworthy objects. When the application was made (as it frequently has been) by individuals evidently suffering under the pangs of hunger, and *utterly* destitute, the urgent claims of nature have been satisfied previous to a particular inquiry, which when made at a subsequent period only tended to confirm the truth of the observation, that the extremes of misery and vice are commonly but too closely allied. Imposition has, however, been guarded against by persons being visited in their abodes.

The Committee now beg leave to lay before the meeting a few details, extracted from letters addressed to the secretary, or obtained from other authentic sources.

The two following Letters were written by Gentlemen who are both Heads of respectable Parties, and who had lived in genteel and comfortable Circumstances in their native Country:—

“Graham’s Town, 23rd Dec. 1822.

“I received your letter, and am glad that some one thinks it worth while to inquire after so wretched a being as myself. I am sorry to tell you, our dear little Matilda is no more. She was with me while reaping some barley, when I told her to go to the house to bring me some water to drink: she ran off, and fell on one of those vile reptiles that abound in this part of the globe, and was stung. I attended my sweet babe for seven days and nights, during which she was in the greatest agony, until mortification took place. She then recovered her senses—prayed for her poor mamma and papa, and expired quite easy, on Tuesday, at four o’clock. She was a lovely child, only four years old: all my misfortunes are nothing compared to this; she was our last and only child.

" You ask me for an account of our situation ; which I will give you ; and I believe it is applicable to all the settlers, as regards our crops and prospect of food for the ensuing year. My wheat, two months ago the most promising I ever saw in any country, is now cut down, and in heaps for burning, before we plough the ground again. The rust has utterly destroyed it ; not a grain have we saved. My barley, from the drought, and a grub which attacks the blade just under the surface, produced little more than I sowed. My Indian corn, very much injured by the caterpillar ; cabbages destroyed by the lice ; the beans all scorched with the hot winds ; the carrots run to seed ; the potatoes are good, but I have but a small quantity. Our cows are all dry for want of grass : not the least appearance of verdure as far as the eye can reach. Nothing but one great wilderness of faded grass, something resembling a couchy fallow in England. On Saturday, whilst watching by the sick bed of my dear little girl, I was startled by the cry of wild dogs *. I ran to the window, and saw about thirty of those ferocious animals : before I could drive them off, they killed twenty of my flock, which consisted of twenty-seven in all. I stood for a moment thinking of my misery—my dying child—my blasted crops—my scattered and ruined flock. God's will be done ! I have need of fortitude to bear up against such accumulated misery. Farewell."

" Graham's Town, 28th Jan. 1823.

" We are all here struggling in the same way in which you left us, or rather worse ; our prospects being still more gloomy, as the crops have again very generally failed in this part of the country. We have also this season been troubled with a new enemy : the caterpillars and locusts have been so numerous, that our gardens are totally destroyed. I took the greatest care of mine, and the prospect of its producing something cheered us a little ; but this unexpected visitation has thrown a complete

* The Wilde Hond, or Wild Dog of the Cape, is mentioned by Burchell as an undescribed and very ferocious species of the hyæna.

damp on our exertions. The season has been so dry, that many farmers in the Graaff-Reynet district have been obliged to leave their places for want of water. Several whom I know here are forced to send three miles for what water they use for domestic purposes. Bread is now quite out of the question; the scanty allowance of half a pound of rice is all we get. We feel much the want of vegetables, sometimes being under the necessity of living several days on meat alone. The Caffres are very troublesome; they lately stole twenty-four head of oxen from me; but misfortune has so long been my companion, that we begin to be reconciled to each other."

The next two Extracts are selected from Letters now before the Committee, and are written by a Gentleman who formerly held a Captain's Commission in his Majesty's Service. They are addressed to a private Friend, who had collected a small Subscription for him in Cape Town.

" Feb. 17, 1823.

" To my friends, and the friends of humanity, I am indebted, I may say, for the existence of myself and family; for really, but for their kind interference, we must have perished.

" If I could only see any kind of bread of my own growing, I should be happy. 'Tis now nearly three months since we had any bread to eat, and indeed, very little rice. If I could any way get a bag of meal, it would be a great relief.

" I am very sorry to be so troublesome: however, necessity compels me to do what my nature somewhat recoils at. We are very badly off for breakfast, which now usually consists of a bit of fried cabbage, or pumpkin stewed. If we once again get bread, we will enjoy it sweetly."

" May 23, 1823.

" Every necessary is so extravagant in Graham's Town, that it is impossible to come at clothing. My sons and myself are

very naked, and the weather is now excessively cold. If I could but get the price of a pair of new wheels for my waggon, I would put my son J—— on the road, and he would earn a little by drawing loads for the shopkeepers in Graham's Town. The calico will be a great relief when it arrives. A whole shirt will now be a great luxury.

"We are at present as badly off as ever. The four cows that gave us milk, which was a great part of our support, are *dry*, owing to a disease now prevailing among the cattle throughout the country."

The following interesting Passages are extracted from the MS. Journal of Mr. F—— (a Gentleman well known to several Members of the Committee), who travelled through the English Locations in March and April last, and personally witnessed many of the facts which he relates.

"March 31.

"Visited Scanlan's party.—There are only three families remaining here, out of seven, of which it originally consisted. They were all, but one, shoemakers, and might have obtained plenty of employment among the Settlers, were it not that there is not one in twenty who has now money sufficient to purchase a pair of shoes; and, in fact, the settlers are generally found without them. These people have still a few cattle, but have lost many by the Caffres. Indian corn and pumpkins are their only produce."

"April 1.

"Mr. Mandy informed me that many in his neighbourhood were in the greatest distress, and that some had killed their last cow for food."

"Baillie's party.—Mr. Adams, who is head of one division of this party, informed me, that there were only thirteen or four-

teen families now remaining on the location, out of the whole of this large settlement. He added, that there was much distress among those who remained ; and instanced one person of the name of H——, who had formerly been in good circumstances, but who, from the failure of every other resource, had that day been forced to go to Graham's Town, to sell some of the small remaining part of his clothes, to keep himself and his family from starving for absolute want."

" April 3.

" Visited Smith and Cock's parties.—Three persons belonging to these two parties had some wheat grown this year ; and, at one of their houses, I eat the first and last bread that I met with in Albany, made from wheat grown by any settler. A few of the other Settlers have bought some of this wheat for seed, at two skillings per pound."

" It is most distressing to see the husband and wife, with scarcely any thing to cover them, and their children in the same condition, lying on the ground on the outside of their miserable huts, roasting a few heads of Indian corn, probably the only food they have. Many have nothing but pumpkins. One family, of the name of H——, had not tasted butcher's meat, nor, I believe, bread, for about three months ; and their children were running about without clothes. As for shoes and stockings, they are seldom to be seen on either old or young.

" I am sorry to be obliged to remark, that all that honest boldness of character, so conspicuous in the yeomen and labourers of England, seems to have left these wretched emigrants ; and they now appear to meet their disappointments and misfortunes with an indifference bordering on despair."

" Hyman and Ford's party are in a truly miserable plight, with scarcely any thing to eat, but a few vegetables. I here saw an aged couple in almost a starving condition. On going into their hut, I found the poor woman boiling a little pumpkin soup, which was mixed with some milk. She said this was the

only food they had ; and their wretched dwelling was neither wind nor water-tight.

“ At a little distance I met what had once been, as I was told, a fine hearty-looking young woman, but now miserably emaciated ; —apparently about twenty-four or twenty-five years of age. She was leading one child, another was following, and a third was on her arm. They were all without shoes or stockings. The woman’s *dress* (if such it could be called), consisted of the remains of an old tent tied about her : the children were clad in the same manner ; and the canvas appeared so rotten, that it would scarcely hang on them.”

“ April 4.

“ On reaching Wilson’s party, we met with many persons who had formerly been in a respectable situation of life in England, and had brought out some property with them. This is the description of people who have suffered the greatest privations and calamities. I spoke to one or two respectable women, who gave me a more lively idea of their melancholy situation, by replying to me in a manner that immediately evinced that they had been well educated and brought up in good society ; though they now appeared to be half starved, and almost broken-hearted, with their persons neglected and in rags. At this place, their gardens had generally failed, and the corn altogether.”

“ April 6.

“ Captain ——— and his two sons were without shoes or stockings ; and actually without sufficient clothing, of any kind, to cover their naked limbs. Their corn had totally failed from blight, and their garden had scarcely produced any thing, in consequence of drought and caterpillars.”

“ Mrs. Currie (who has a shop at Bathurst), told me, that though almost every settler was in the greatest distress for want of the common necessities of life ; and though the articles she

sells are chiefly of this description, yet there was almost no demand ; because not one in fifty had a single rix dollar to expend. Such, however, she added, was the distress of some, that she could not help giving credit, though with little or no prospect of ever being repaid."

The remaining Selections have been furnished to the Secretary from different most respectable Quarters.

The first is extracted from a Letter addressed to Mr. T. Pringle, by a Medical Officer on the Caffre Frontier, and dated August 29, 1823.

" During my recent stay at ———, I had opportunities of seeing a good deal of the actual state of the settlers in Albany ; and I can truly declare, I never witnessed so much poverty and misery before. Whilst your friends on the Bavian's River are reported to be in comparative comfort and prosperity, our countrymen in the Zuureveldt are without the necessaries of life *. Disease too was amongst them, and some families presented a deplorable picture."

The next is also taken from a private Letter, addressed to a Gentleman now in Cape Town. It was written by an Individual of high Character and Connexions, and who has honourably held the Office of Justice of the Peace in England, and that of Heemraad in South Africa.

" Sept. 1, 1823.

" My family are this day without bread, and I can procure none in Graham's Town, at any price. Rice is also very dear and scarce. Now, in our fourth year, our privations are greater than ever. The Spring-bucks are increasing so much, that all

* The Scotch party are located far up in the interior, on one of the sources of the Great Fish River, parallel with the Sheawberg, and have suffered less from the blight than any other settlers.

my own corn and my nearest neighbour's on the plain has been entirely eaten down. My people are obliged to take their turns in watching them all night. Barker and Biggar have severally lost thirty and forty head of cattle last week by the Caffres:—Stanly, all his yesterday."

The same Gentleman, on the 8th of September, says :

"Before our present crop is ripe, much distress will be felt for want of food. It is really lamentable to hear of and witness the distress that now prevails from this cause. A poor Irishman told me to-day, that many families, besides his own, were living, 'like the soldiers' horses—on green forage;'—for he had eaten nothing during the last two days but lettuces and leeks! Times are so hard that we cannot employ labourers."

In a Communication, dated September 27th, we have the following Statement, from the same Correspondent.

"I was yesterday asked to join in a petition to government to send down Indian corn for seed to the settlers, as it cannot be procured here. I have been this week at the Kowie with my waggon to get flour and rice from the little vessel (the Good Intent), which came in a day or two before. I was fortunate in getting one bag of brown rice for my share, for which I paid 20 rix dollars. The whole of her cargo was flour and rice, and was disposed of in the boat as it was landed: and numbers went away without a morsel, declaring, that their families at home were without grain of any kind. It was, indeed, most pitiable to witness the disappointment of those who have hoarded up a few dollars for this arrival, and returned empty. I saw some of Thornhill's, Smith's, Cock's, the Nottingham, Wilson's, Bradshaw's, Southey's, and Holder's parties; to all of whom I put the question, whether they could spare me half a muid or so of Indian corn? The universal reply was, 'We have none for our own use—we have not even enough for seed.'

"The rust or blight is very prevalent both in the rye and solid straw wheat, but I sincerely hope they will not be materially hurt. All the other forward wheats have suffered as usual—nothing remains of them."

Another Gentleman, whose high Respectability and moderate Sentiments are also well known to the Committee, writes to a Friend on Sept. 29, as follows :

"I am not one who wish to encourage the reports of general distress for food ; but to say that the settlers have *plenty*, is too barefaced. I believe very few have sufficient Indian corn for seed. Applications are made to me from all quarters for it, as I happen to have a little to spare. With respect to our crops—the Cape wheat has entirely failed ; the solid-straw, or Bengal wheat, I trust, will answer ; and experience has taught the settlers, that they must plant plenty of Indian corn and pumpkins. Should these succeed, bread will not be absolutely wanted. But the most serious thing is the distress occasioned by the Caffres taking the milch cows. Numbers of little farmers who had got together twenty or thirty cows, and were thereby enabled to support their families, and sell butter sufficient to purchase bread, have been deprived of their little stock by these savages, and compelled to quit their locations, and seek employment in Graham's Town."

Mr. Collis, Proprietor of the only Mill hitherto established in the New Settlements, states, in a Note, dated 29th September :—

"That no wheat grown by any settler had ever yet been brought to be ground at his mill ; but that it had been partly occupied up to the end of July last, in grinding barley, Indian corn, and a little rye, reaped by settlers last season. Since that period, not six muids of grain of any sort had been received into the mill ; and out of that (he adds), several persons have taken back maize to seed, so it is evident there is none in hand to grind."

*The Correspondent referred to at Page 27, continues on the
30th September :—*

“ The report that the settlers have had abundant crops of Indian corn, or that they have now any tolerable supply remaining, is utterly untrue. It is now selling at one shilling (English) *per quart*, for seed. Since I came from home, I am sorry to find that the prospects for harvest are worse : rust and drought are destroying every thing. The Caffres continue uncommonly active. Pigot, Cooper, Bester, Delport, Erasmus, and Vandyke, have all lost cattle. If we have not effectual relief in a very short time, we must quit our locations. It is become really distressing and alarming. O, for Van Dieman's Land ! I am heartily sick of it, and dread being a moment from home on account of the Caffres.”

*The following are Extracts from a Speech delivered at the Meeting
by the Rev. Dr. Phillip.*

“ Without reflecting upon any man, or any class of men, I maintain that it is impossible to remove 5000 men from their native country, and plant them in any other country under heaven, without involving a vast portion of suffering. For an illustration of this subject we have only to look to the different emigrations to America, in the first colonization of that country. Many of the first settlers suffered greatly, and some whole parties perished for want of the necessaries of life on spots that are now supporting a dense population. The history of the Sierra Leone settlement is well known ; many lives were lost, and much property sunk before the experiment afforded any rational prospect of success. The colonization of New Holland is also a case in point. During the early periods of that settlement the colonists were often in the greatest distress : several times they were under the painful apprehension of death by famine ; for six years they continued to receive a great part of their supplies from Batavia, from India, and from England, at considerable expense to the mother country.

“ From 1550 to 1570, including the first twenty years of the history of this colony, although the number of the first settlers was not one-third of the number landed in Albany, it cost the Dutch East India Company twenty millions of guilders. Though it is not my intention at present to attempt to account for the facts, yet it may be remarked, that there seems to be something in a virgin soil unfavourable to the support of human life; and it seems to be with men as with vegetables,—they must suffer, after being transplanted, before they can take root.

“ One circumstance may be mentioned, in passing, which has added to the distress of the settlers. In the emigrations constantly taking place to America, the emigrants having landed at New York, Boston, Quebec, or some large town, find employment, assistance, or the means of subsistence, in the countries through which they pass, and from the colonists settled in the immediate neighbourhood of their locations: but in the late emigration to this colony, we have between four and five thousand people conducted at once to a country possessed by a few Dutch boors, who, in case of any failure of the Emigrants' hopes, could give them no assistance.

“ Shall we be told, to set aside their claims on our benevolence, that they want industry? If, after the failure of so many crops, they neglect to cultivate the soil, to the full extent of the credit they may have given them for physical energies, is it matter of surprise? They cannot command the clouds of heaven to rain upon their fields: they cannot raise the water, from the deep ravines to which it is confined, to irrigate their gardens: they cannot arrest Omnipotence, and stop the progress of that blight, which, through successive years, has destroyed the promise of the harvest. And, if under the repeated strokes of the Almighty, the mind loses its tone, when nothing but the powerful aids of religion can prevent depression, and stimulate to perseverance the unhappy sufferers are more entitled to our sympathy than deserving of censure.

“ The claims of our unhappy countrymen upon our sympathy, are of more than an ordinary character. In that country, which

was described in all the glowing tints of eastern imagery as a *second Land of Promise*, you may see the fingers, which seldom moved but to paint for the eye, or to charm the ear, tying up cattle, or stopping up the gaps of their enclosure: females, on whom, in England, the wind was scarcely allowed to blow, exposed to all the rage of the pitiless storm; mothers with large families, who used to have a servant to each child, without an individual to assist them in the drudgery of the house, the labour of the dairy, or the care of their children; families who used to sleep upon down, with scarcely a sufficient number of boards, or a sufficient quantity of straw, to keep them from an earthen floor; young females, possessed of every accomplishment, reduced to feed a few cows, almost the sole dependence of the family; men, who have held the ranks of captains and paymasters in the army, driving waggons without shoes or stockings!

“ In a tour I made through the locations of the settlers, I found a gentleman, whose connexions at home I knew to be respectable, with two lovely daughters, without a single servant, male or female, upon the place. I asked him how he came to be in this situation? In reply, he said, with much mildness and apparent resignation, ‘ I have sunk my all, I have spent my last shilling, and I have never reaped one handful of produce from my farm.’ On another location, I entered a house in which I was ushered into the presence of a female, whose dress and circumstances exhibited such a contrast to her manners and former connexions in life, that, when she began to talk of Sir John ———, Sir Wm. ———, General ———, Lady ———, as her relations, and to ask me if I knew such persons, it required a considerable effort to persuade myself that I was not listening to a person under mental derangement. To describe all the heads of the parties I met under similar circumstances, would be to enumerate the greater part of them. I am fully satisfied that if, in some instances, clamorous individuals may have exaggerated the miseries of their own condition, one-fifth of the real distress of the settlers, as a body, has neither met the public eye, nor been made known by their own report.

“ If there be any thing interesting in the condition of an emigrant, to him that knows the heart of a stranger in a strange land ; any thing to excite pity for men smarting under the rod of the Almighty, like Job, when he exclaimed, *Have pity upon me, Oh ! my friends, have pity upon me, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me* ; any thing to excite sympathy in old age, bending over the grave of a partner in life who has died of a broken heart ; any thing touching in the name of widow ; any thing tender in the condition of fatherless children ; any thing affecting in the sight of young accomplished females reduced, not to the spindle and the distaff, but to the drudgery that falls to the lot of the slave, in the service of the African boor ; if there be any thing in hunger and nakedness to excite pity—we have all these claims embodied in this Institution. The ancients had a temple dedicated to Pity—the human heart is the proper seat of pity ; and what objects can have a greater claim to pity, than those in whose cause we are assembled here this day ? I may be told there are greater objects of pity than these settlers. I admit the fact ; and if asked who they are, I reply—they are those persons who wish to destroy our sympathy towards our unfortunate countrymen ! I would rather be the greatest sufferer in Albany, than be in the condition of those individuals, who not only refuse to relieve their distress, but would prevent others from doing it. ‘ They that be slain by the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger ; for these pine away, stricken through, for want of the fruits of the field.’ ”

The following Speech was delivered by Sir Richard Ottery.

“ I shall abstain from all topics which might appear to be introduced for the purposes of declamation, and all exaggeration of the sufferings of the Colonists. That their distress is serious—that their wants are urgent, and call for our immediate assistance, cannot be doubted by any one who has attentively considered the documents presented to the Society, and the statements received

from those who have had the best opportunities of ascertaining the situation to which the Settlers are reduced. We might enlarge much upon the state of destitution and nakedness in which many of the inhabitants are placed, and the scenes of calamity and woe which are presented to the eyes of those who have visited the locations. But I prefer to confine myself to those facts which are contained in the Report, and which have been stated during the course of this day's proceedings, because we have had an opportunity of examining the truth of those facts. All those statements have been made by eye-witnesses; by gentlemen who have resided amongst the Settlers, or have travelled through the districts where the Colonists have been fixed. The existence of those calamitous circumstances having been sufficiently proved, it becomes our duty to search out and to apply the best remedy in our power. I therefore propose, in the first part of my motion, that we should renew and increase our exertions in behalf of the objects in whose welfare we are interested. This is absolutely necessary on our part, because, upon looking to the state of our finances, I perceive, that we possess only the balance of 723 rix dollars applicable to their relief—a sum wholly inadequate to afford the assistance which is now so imperiously demanded. But I do not rest here. The ulterior object of my motion is to call upon others to co-operate with us in the same benevolent work; and we cannot expect that other persons residing in distant countries should come forward with their money, if they see that we are idle and unconcerned. But if our fellow-countrymen in England and other parts of the world are informed that we are making efforts, and are endeavouring to augment our means in proportion to the increased wants of the sufferers, we may hope that they will be ready to assist, and to supply the deficiency which remains, after we have exhausted our resources.

“The Settlers may properly be divided into four classes.—1. The heads of parties. 2. Those who have joined together and have been working upon a joint stock. 3. The agricultural servants; and, 4. The mechanics. Of these classes of persons, the two latter descriptions are alone exempted from the sufferings which have

afflicted the others ; and it is therefore for the purpose of assisting the two former classes, that I call upon this meeting to adopt the present motion. The heads of parties are those who have been most severely afflicted, and they are the persons who are least likely to make their afflictions public. They have lost nearly the whole of their capital, and have received no return for the grain which has been sown. Three successive failures have reduced to penury all who depended upon the produce of the earth. Those who have traded upon a joint stock are nearly in similar embarrassments. It is in favour of these persons that we are peculiarly called upon for assistance. But numerous are the sufferers of all denominations. Women who have lost their husbands—children deprived of their parents—what resources have these ?

“The report has brought to our notice more than one instance of persons almost in a state of destitution, and who are literally deprived of all means of support, except those which are afforded by our subscriptions. We must, then, renew our efforts ; we must give all we can afford : and having done so, we may request others to come forward also ; and whenever such appeal has been made to the hearts of the English people, that appeal has seldom been made in vain. Unworthy objects have too frequently found means to impose on the generosity of the people of England, and have obtained those alms which might have been better appropriated ; but when a case of real distress has been brought home to the knowledge of our countrymen, few instances are recorded in which they have refused to afford relief.

“I wish, further, to let the distress of the settlers be made known in India. Many gentlemen from India are now resident—or in the habit of visiting this colony. They will be enabled to ascertain the reality of the present distress, and to afford such information as may tend to verify our report, and to give effect to those measures which it is our object and our wish to promote.”

Extract of a Letter received from a Gentleman recently arrived from the Cape of Good Hope, dated January, 1824.

“ Mr. E—— told me, before I left the Cape, that the report gave but a faint idea of the actual wretchedness of the settlers; that many cases of extreme distress had not been brought forward, from a feeling of delicacy towards the sufferers, many of whom had lived in affluence previous to their arrival in the colony, and the greatest share of distress seems to have fallen on this class.”

Extract of a Letter from Cape Town, dated 15th Nov. 1823.

“ The distresses of the emigrants have now arrived at such a height, that unless something effectual is done, many must starve; nothing done by our society can be sufficient, and we trust some steps will be taken at home.”

Extract of another Letter, dated 30th November.

“ Relief must be given from home, or many will perish for want. Do what you can amongst your private friends; for I assure you, whatever distress you may have at home, I can hardly think such accumulated misery as some of these poor creatures are now suffering can be equalled.”

Extract of a Letter dated Oct. 15, 1823.

“ A residence of three years had given us sufficient proofs of the extremes to which this country is subject: one day the thermometer 84°, and the next perhaps 64°; but we were yet to experience the full extremes of moisture, and its consequences. From December 1820, until near a period of thirty-four months, there never fell sufficient rain so as completely to saturate the earth, or even to keep the streams running. On Saturday, 5th

October, a fine gentle rain commenced, and continued all Monday: the two following days we had seasonable showers, and every thing assumed the most delightful verdure; the late sown corn shot up luxuriantly, and the more forward began to fill and to recover from the previous drought. Thursday night, however, proved stormy, and brought heavier rain, and it appeared evident that the earth had had its fill, and could contain no more; indeed the little depth of soil which this country possesses obliges it soon to overflow, and on Friday night we had melancholy proofs of it: not only the streams were rolling in torrents, but the whole country was covered with fresh ones; my garden had suffered a little, and my new embankment had given way; my sheep were dying in numbers; and my corn land, which is situated very high, had a stream running over it sufficient to turn a mill. We were glad, however, to escape so well. On Saturday it cleared off, and we congratulated ourselves, that, taking every thing into consideration, our losses were so trivial, and we resolved to profit by the past, convinced that 'eternal sunshine' was not to be expected, even in this colony. On Monday the weather again altered to a thick fog, and then rain; and at sun-set it began to thunder and lighten, and continued with scarcely the least intermission throughout the night awful in the extreme. The streams were 12 feet, and in one place 140 feet broad, carrying every thing before them;—one-third of my cattle kraal was carried off, the embankment levelled to the ground, and the gardens and fruit-trees washed away in various places;—the potatoes in the field and garden were furrowed up and washed off, and to-day, as the torrent has abated, we find them hanging here and there in the bushes, five feet high: in short, a more complete picture of the effects of a deluge could not be presented. The flood was at its height a little after nine o'clock, and the quantity of rain which fell in the last hour was astonishing. It will now be manifest to all, what are the causes of the naked rocks which intersect the country, the deep kloofs, and the little depth and want of fertility of the soil; it is to these tremendous visitations which wash the country gradually away, that such effects can be ascribed.

"Although I was prepared in some measure to expect severe storms from conversations with older residents, yet I must own myself thoroughly surprised at the rise and extent of such land overflowings and inundations. To be short of water for two years and more, and then to be suddenly inundated by such mighty torrents, must be peculiar to this country. Yesterday, several of my poor neighbours came to recount their losses, and entreated me to come and inspect their situation, and advise them what to do; as soon as I can spare time, I shall do so. Commodore Nourse has just called; he assures me that every house in Bathurst had suffered more or less."

LONDON:

PRINTED BY THOMAS DAVISON, WHITEFRIARS.

